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INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 6177
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RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3935
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 4094
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 2107
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1574
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/RA, AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/18/2019

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KWMN](#) [SOCI](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: ANOTHER LENIENT SENTENCE FOR "HONOR" CRIME IN JORDAN

REF: A. 08 AMMAN 3280

[B](#). 08 AMMAN 3123

[C](#). 03 AMMAN 6027

[1](#). (U) A three judge panel at the Criminal Court sentenced a 19-year-old man on January 28 to six months in prison for killing his sister for walking alone at night with a male Syrian acquaintance. The man was immediately released as he had already served over six months. The court amended premeditated murder charges sought by the prosecutor to a misdemeanor based on Penal Code Article 98 - "crime of passion" clause, which punishes offenders with prison terms of only three months to two years. The court, according to a Jordan Times article on January 30, stated in its ruling that "the sister's dreadful act of walking with the Syrian at night caused the defendant to lose his balanced thinking." The article also mentioned that the postmortem showed the victim had not engaged in sexual activity.

[2](#). (U) In the past week, on February 10, another "honor" crime was reported. A 21-year old man from a town southeast of Amman allegedly confessed to stabbing his 24-year old sister ten times because he overheard men talking about her. The prosecutor has charged the man with premeditated murder. Post will monitor the progress of this case, which represents another test for the judicial handling of honor crimes.

[3](#). (U) The January 28 sentencing continues the long tradition of Jordanian judges invoking Article 98 in nearly every honor crime case, even when prosecutors try the individual for premeditated murder. Activists had hoped that the early December 2008 sentencing of two men to seven-and-a-half-years for their respective "honor" crimes represented a new trend in judicial rulings (ref A) following the King's public call for the elimination of violence against women and children (ref B).

[4](#). (C) Ministry of Justice (MOJ) officials have told Post they are taking steps to address lenient sentencing. Minister of Justice Odeh updated the Ambassador recently on a proposed amendment to Article 99, which would raise minimum sentencing for Article 98 to five years and which would be included in a much larger penal code package of amendments. The MOJ hopes to submit the amendment package to Parliament during an extraordinary session, which may start in June. That being said, Prime Minister Nader Al-Dahabi told Ambassador on February 11 that this legislative change was a longer-term goal as tribal-minded MPs would likely vote down such amendments in the next session. In the short run, Dahabi indicated that the government would attempt to use its limited influence over judges to alter their handling of

these cases.

¶5. (SBU) The MOJ has already taken action by appointing two prosecutors to handle honor crimes cases and providing them with car, driver, cell phones, and per diem reimbursement to lead the investigation and build the strongest possible cases. Dahabi praised recent work of women's groups that are engaged on the issue, particularly for their strong presentations of why honor crimes are unacceptable.

¶5. (C) Comment: The hurdles to ending "honor crimes" are significant. They require a strong public stance by GOJ, societal, and religious leaders that such crimes will not be tolerated. They also require a change of the societal belief that women do not have equal standing. In the past week, the Ambassador discussed the issue with Chief of the Royal Court Nasser Lozi, Foreign Minister Salah Bashir, Dahabi, and Odeh. All voiced their strong commitment to tackle the issue. Post is also drafting an honor crime action plan to outline steps required by all stakeholders and potential assistance areas to support GOJ, NGO, and community efforts. End Comment

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